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Other parts of the narrative, pronounced with so much confidence, by our author, to be only “a tissue of fiction,” may, perhaps, be found equally susceptible of explanation. But we have already extended this article far beyond the limits originally intended, and must hasten to a conclusion. A further discussion of the subject is promised in a work now in the progress of publication at Copenhagen, on the monuments of ancient Greenland, which will unquestionably throw much new light upon it. In the mean time, we intend to hold our minds open to conviction, instead of coming to a hasty decision in a question of so much importance, involving the honor of a noble house, and the glory of an ancient republic. But we are free to acknowledge, that, so far as we have been enabled to pursue our investigations, with the dim light afforded to us by the few authorities on the subject within our reach, our convictions are unequivocally favorable to the substantial truth of the relation of the noble brothers ; — convictions, that, we trust, for the honor of our common nature, and the fame of that venerable commonwealth, may be hereafter fully confirmed.

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- ART. IX. — 1. *L' Ildegonda e la Fuggitiva, Novelle Romantiche di Tommaso Grossi.* Firenze : 1825.  
2. *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata, Canti Quindici di Tommaso Grossi.* Milano : 1829.  
3. *Ulrico e Lida, Novella di Tommaso Grossi.* Napoli : 1837.  
4. *L' Esule di Pietro Giannone.* Parigi : 1830.  
5. *Poesie di Giovanni Berchet.* Londra : 1827.

THERE are six great highways across the ridge of the Alps. From the Alps to the ocean, it is but a journey of three days. The Sirius and the Great Western have stretched a long bridge across the ocean, and the old world has shaken hands with the new. The bulletins of the French legions in Africa reach Paris in two days. Fresh figs from Smyrna are served on the tables of London. Queen Victoria crowns her head with flowers from a green-house of New York.

Yet steam-engines are only an infant discovery. It will not be long, and we may live to witness the time, when all Europe shall be but one vast city, and the United States a pretty suburb just across the ferry ; when, like Philip, we shall say to our children, “ Seek for another world ; this earth is too narrow for you ! ”

Books, the first movers, perhaps, of this rapid whirling of men and things, do not circulate with the astonishing speed of other articles of luxury. Learning sails on a heavy-laden ship, encumbered with a weighty ballast of pedantry. We want oranges and pineapples from the tropics, ice and furs from the poles. Books grow in all climates ; every country has but too many of its own. Oppressed with business at home, we have no time to think of our neighbours. Our literary reputations are confined within the limits of our district. In days of darkness, Petrarch was received in triumph, as a prophet, wherever he moved ; in our days, the notoriety of Byron in Venice was owing to his handsome face, and to the singularity of his manners. Many a school-book, on the old continent, is still teaching that Florida is a province of Spain, Louisiana a French colony. To them the capital of the Union is still Philadelphia. Boston is very seldom heard of ; Pittsburg and Buffalo never. On the other side, nothing comes here from Naples except maccaroni ; Parma is known only for its exquisite cheese. Many ask whether the Pope is the king of Italy ; and we have heard of a lady who, with earnest conviction, numbered the Italian among the dead languages. Alas ! ignorance is much more vast than the ocean !

Few modern languages, however, are more generally studied than the Italian. Whether this is to be attributed to its velvet smoothness, or to the general persuasion of its easy acquisition, or to the general diffusion of the music of Bellini, it is certain, that, in all Europe, that language ranks with the English in its commercial, the German in its literary, and the French in its diplomatic and choregraphic importance. The ladies of the eastern cities of America are rivalling Europe in this, as in other branches of literary culture. One hundred young men are annually trained to the acquirement of it in Harvard College. All persons, who have any pretension to learning, have, more or less, had something to do with Italian.

But, although few share now the opinion of the good lady, that twenty-two millions of people cannot keep a language alive, it is a general persuasion, received and accredited among sensible persons, that the literature of that country is dead, and that Italy, exhausted with the productions of five centuries, by which she has waked her rude neighbours into literary life, is resting now under the shade of her laurels, and surveying the youthful efforts of England and Germany, like a superannuated wrestler, with downcast brow and folded arms, looking upon the feats of his disciples from the head of the circus.

In calling the attention of American readers to books, which have never reached or never circulated among them, it is our purpose to give some general views of the direction that literary studies are taking in Italy ; to point out how far the influence of German and English literature acts upon the productions of that land, accustomed to exert, not to obey, influence, and what important revolutions are going forward in the taste and genius of a nation, whose creative power can never be extinguished, whose genius is indigenous, and whose resources are inexhaustible as its soil ; which has successively nourished generations of Gauls, Romans, and Greeks ; of Goths, Vandals, and Lombards ; of Spaniards and Frenchmen ; and which is now but too rich and luxuriant for Croats and Hungarians.

Italy is, in modern civilization, the eldest of countries. Laboring under the miseries of decrepitude, she exhibits, in her outward aspect, the long ravages of age. The sea has receded from her coasts ; several of her noblest harbours have been dried up and deserted. The discords of her former republics, the inroads of Moors and pirates, and the improvidence of her successive governments, have turned into swamps her flourishing shores and the shores of her islands. The clearing of woods in the mountains has let in the winds of the north, and sprinkled with hoary frost the fair hair of her Apennines. War and earthquakes, all the scourges of heaven, have desolated, demolished, buried her cities. Invasions, migrations, the crossing of races, have degraded her character, eclipsed her grandeur, obliterated her name. Rome and Ravenna, Pavia, Venice, and Pisa, by turns queens and empresses, lie now inglorious and senseless, like spectre cities, the grass growing in their wide streets, the moss creep-

ing over the marble of their tottering palaces. Ruins of forums and aqueducts, arches of bridges and mausoleums, Gothic castles and temples, nunneries, dungeons, Madonnas, and Venuses, the wrecks of all worships and governments, the pride of all rulers and conquerors, all crushed in a common heap, mouldering in a general dissolution ;—such has been, and, to a certain extent, such is, Italy. But among those ruins a few warm, confiding hearts may be seen, impatient of that lingering decay, hastening the work of time, trampling those remains with disdain, to level them to the ground, a basis for new edifices ; young believers, firm in the opinion of an approaching redemption, persuaded, that, like Tithonus of the fable, Italy is doomed to old age, not to death ; young thinkers, exulting in the eternal reproduction of all things, pointing to Leghorn and Trieste, new towns rising and thriving as the old decline ; the vale of the Po inheriting the ever smiling fertility of Apulia and Campania ; the Lombard character, strengthened and ennobled in proportion to the relaxation of the Roman and Tuscan ; the elements of Italy in ages to come.

The romantic literature in that land is the representative of this spirit of regeneration. Literature is not politics ; but the highest and dearest patriotic feelings are very often, if not essentially, its main resource. Poetry and eloquence may grow independent of all forms of governments ; but they always receive a decisive impulse from the established orders of society, and exert upon them a strong reaction. Literature is not politics. The air of liberty is not so essential to the budding of genius, as the spring breeze to the opening of flowers. Byron was born in England, rocked in the cradle of freedom ; Schiller was bred up in Austria, fed upon errors and prejudices. But letters and arts want excitement ; they can sail with all winds, but not without wind. The mind expands in proportion to its own exertion. Give a genius passion and movement, delirium and fever, anxiety and suffering ; let the mountain stream madden through rocks and over precipices, dash and foam against bridges and dikes ; but let it not exhaust its might on the plain, to stagnate in marshes and mire.

The regeneration which is now in progress in Italy, although in great part of a political cast, does not depend on political vicissitudes. Whether the petty fragments, into

which the nation is dismembered, will feel, at a future day, the want of a federative bond, or whether the sighed-for union shall be the work of the daring ambition of one of her national princes, or of the cautious cupidity of Austria, or whether, in a general convulsion of Europe, her children shall raise a unanimous cry for emancipation ; one fact is unquestionable, — that Italy is rising to action. It is not there a question of democracy or aristocracy, of reforms or constitutions. It is a question of existence. The revolution of Italy is not to be effected by sects and conspiracies, not by fortuitous incidents of wars, or changes of dynasties ; it must arise from the recasting of individual character, from the enlightened resentment of masses, from the sympathy of an immense, compact population, from the resources of a rich soil, from the seeds sown by a liberal, refined civilization, developed in several unsuccessful attempts, and only strengthened by senseless persecutions.

Few countries have, in the course of the last fifty years, — we mean in the age of Napoleon, — undergone a more total revolution than Italy. Her political divisions and boundaries are, indeed, nearly the same, with the exception, perhaps, of Venice and Genoa, the last leaves hanging on a withered branch, destined to drop at the first blast of November ; but all the notions, the morals, the passions, the prejudices and superstitions, the popular festivals, games, and spectacles, have either been entirely abolished, or changed in their nature and object, or have given place to others of an entirely opposite character. From the days of Charles the Fifth to the end of the last century, under the direct or indirect influence of Spaniards and Austrians, Italy had fallen from her former importance, unaware of what she lost. Persuaded of her beneficent influence on the general course of modern civilization, she relied upon the gratitude of all nations. Milan and Naples, the most important states of the Peninsula, indeed, had fallen a prey to strangers. But the Lion of Venice still braved the Crescent by land and sea ; the Dukes of Savoy laid their glove in the balance of Europe, formidable allies and adversaries. Spain and Austria trembled at every starting of the populace of Naples and Genoa. Rome had laid aside her sword, but ruled the world by the crosier ; Florence had bent to the Medici, but dictated laws and manners by letters and arts. Besides, her sky smiled as brightly as ever, her climate was

as mild. A privileged land, removed from all cares of political existence, Italy went on with dances and music, happy in her ignorance, sleeping in the intoxication of uninterrupted prosperity. Accustomed to the scourges of invasion, passive in all the rivalries among her neighbours, used to suffer and to forget, she consoled herself for the evils inflicted by foreigners upon her sons, with the old saying, that her land was destined to be the tomb of her conquerors. The first spring shower washed away the blood with which the invaders had stained the green enamel of her plains ; the first harvest, luxuriant from a soil enriched by French and German corpses, made up for the dearth occasioned by the waste of a hungry soldiery ; and the sons of the South took up again their guitars, wiped away their tears, and sang anew, like a cloud of sparrows when the tempest is over.

Such were not the consequences of the late wars ; her neighbours were envious of that uninterrupted enjoyment ; the serpent intruded himself into the Eden of Europe. The French philosophers persuaded the Italians they were too happy ; and they envied the tempests of France, as if tired of happiness. The French, wanting aid from every quarter, hailed the awakening of Italy. They gave her a standard ; they girt her sons with the weapons of war ; they seated them in senates and parliaments. They dusted the iron crown of the Lombards, and placed it on the brow of one of her islanders. The Italians started up. They believed ; they followed ; they fought. Deceived by the French, they turned to the Austrians ; betrayed by the Austrians, they came back to the French. It was a succession of deception and perfidy, of blind confidence and disappointment ; and when, weary, dejected, and ravaged, they lay down, abandoned to their bitter reflections, an awful truth shone in its full evidence, the only price for torrents of blood, — that, beyond the Alps, they had nothing but enemies. The reaction was long and severe. To these few years of raving intoxication, lethargy succeeded, and nothingness. The sword was taken from the side of the brave ; the lips of the wise were closed ; the name of Italy was proscribed. All was settled, and silenced, and fettered, but thought. Thought remained, anxious, sleepless, rebellious ; with a grim, severe monitor behind, — Memory ; and a rosy, seducing Syren before, — Hope, always within his reach, always re-

ceding from his embrace ; and he sat a tyrant of the soul, preyed upon the heart of the young, of the brave, of the lovely, choosing his victims with the cruel sagacity of the vampyre ; and he strewed their couches with thorns, and sprinkled their feasts with poison, and snatched from their hands the cup of pleasure. “ Italians,” he said, “ remember what you have been, what you are, what you must be. Is it thus, on the dust of heroes, is it in the fairest of lands, that you drag on days of abjectness ? Will you never afford a better spectacle to the nations, than masquerades and processions of monks ? Will you never go out among strangers except as fiddlers and limners ? England and France are subduing deserts and oceans ; Germany flourishes in science and letters. The sons of the North are snatching from your hands the sceptre of the arts. What is to become of Italy ? Shall her name be buried under these ruins, to which you cling with the fondness of a nobleman, prouder of the armorial bearings and portraits of his ancestors, in proportion as he degenerates from them ? Shall it be said of her sons, that they have made their own destiny, and they groan under a yoke they have merited ? ”

Such is the bitter chagrin to which the Italians have been left, from the ephemeral excitement arising from the revolutionary ideas of the late convulsions of Europe. The nation at large has assumed a serious and sullen countenance. The revels of the carnivals have lost their attraction ; that slow and silent disease, that atrabilious frenzy, — politics, pervades all ranks, exhibiting a striking contrast with the radiant and harmonious gayety of heaven and earth. Morals gain by that melancholy mood. Studies are pursued with incredible eagerness, and come off conquerors over all obstacles raised against them.

Unfortunately the rulers have not been capable of justly appreciating the new ideas and wants of the age. Instead of encouraging those awakening energies, and directing them to noble pursuits, they have been alarmed at the prevailing restlessness of mind ; they have apprehended in it the germs of social dissolution. Since their restoration, they have laid aside their wonted clemency, and have consequently roused a spirit of opposition. The march of their government is checked at every step. In every debate, public opinion always declares against power. From the smug-



gler of the mountains to the ringleader of the university, the most daring transgressor is ever the idol of the multitude. In every district, that deplorable contest is more or less openly waged. The skirmishes are short, the field of battle is narrow, but the exasperation is immense. Unfortunately, the dungeon, exile, and the scaffold have been resorted to. Blood has been lavishly shed ; it has raised an insurmountable barrier against all possible reconciliation ; it has heated the passions of those classes, to whom party spirit would never otherwise have descended. A tale of woe from the Spielberg has moved the sympathies of all Europe. A cry of horror has risen against Modena, where, as in ancient Egypt, every mother is weeping for her first-born. Meanwhile, the land is sterile of events. Literature, as well as commerce, industry, and all the fine arts, except music, are unproductive. All is mute and sad, as in the calm which precedes the storm. Every one recognises an age of transition, of preparation. Every one feels, that Italy has no longer any lower degree of dejection to sink into ; that, according to the rules of Providence, she has a right to look to the future for brighter days ; that all her sons are natural brothers and allies ; that their enemy is the same, and their cause is one ; that God was pleased to associate them in common sufferings, that they might aspire to a common redemption.

It may be easily perceived, how far literature must be imbued with the spirit of the times we have attempted to describe. It is a literature of constraint and discontent ; of transition and expectation ; reluctant and murmuring ; stifled and tortured. A proud enthusiasm has given a strange relish for silence and melancholy. The Italian bards rend the chords of their harps, shaking their heads with a sullen disdain. “No,” they exclaim, “we shall not sing the lays of our land for the gratification of strangers ; we shall not soothe, with our verses, the toils of bondmen. Let the brightness of our sky be clouded ; let the fire be quenched in the eyes of the daughters of Italy ; the pure enjoyment of the treasures of nature are the exclusive possession of noble souls ; the smiles of beauty are the sacred reward for high deeds. The songs of the troubadour are reserved for the delight of the brave, who dare to rival his heroes.” The voice of the Italian bards is mute. They seek the solitude of their groves, the stillness of their ruins, refusing utterance to their

sorrows, and obstinately feeding upon them ; or they carry their chagrin beyond mountains and seas, roaming from land to land, among strangers who cannot understand them, to pine away slowly, and die ; like an exotic plant, drinking a scanty ray through the panes of a hot-house, drooping its head on its consumptive stem, and yielding life without struggle or regret.

But, independently of the political circumstances peculiar to Italy, literature is there, as in the rest of Europe, in a state of transition. As in politics, so in letters and arts, there are two antagonist parties ; there are the ideas of the old social world, and the wants of the new. In politics, the two opposite parties are distinguished by the names of legitimists and liberals ; in literature, they are called the classical and romantic.

*Romanticism*, that word, so vaguely defined, and so strangely interpreted ; that universal reformer, extending from the frame of an epic poem, to the head-dress of a girl, a substitute, in Europe, for all endearing adjectives ; a seducing enchanter, surrounded with fairies and genii, haunting lonely towers and silent groves, crowned with holly and cypress, with mail on his breast, a cowl on his head, a red cross on his mantle ; mounted on a spotted horse, with a damsel *en croupe* ; a hawk perched on his gauntlet, and a harp of gold slung across his shoulder ; this creation of the Northern fancy, received in Italy with eager hospitality, is about to usurp there an undisputed sway over letters and arts, as soon as the consciousness of political existence shall set the wings of Italian genius at liberty.

In Italy, with the exception of the writers of the age of Dante, and a few others in the sixteenth century, literature had been the sterile possession of individuals, and had never attempted to exert any influence on the mass of the people. Men of letters, a privileged class of academicians, Arcadians, and doctors, strangers to the age in which they lived, never studied its character or its wants ; on the contrary, they abstracted themselves from the present, to live exclusively in the past. Hence, literature remained for many centuries behind the people, and the people arrived at new ideas without guidance or instruction. A veneration for the immortal works of antiquity, which the researches of the literary men of that country had brought to light out of the darkness of the

Middle Ages, inspired them with such fondness for all that belonged to the old world, that they transported themselves into it in imagination, and spoke, and wrote, and thought, as if they had been the ghosts of their ancestors. Hence their sweet language was too vulgar and tame for their grand ideas. The names, with which they had been baptized, were not sufficiently sonorous ; the dress of their contemporaries did not sweep the floor with sufficient majesty ; and, in idle and puerile pursuits, they wasted their powers, and forgot their true mission, — public improvement.

Hence, Italian genius was exhausted for ages on those long, empty sermons for the theatre, which they styled tragedies ; poor translations from the Greek, which they called originals ; poor Grecian faces, disguised in the French costume, and redolent of French perfumes ; or in those childish playthings of the shepherds of Arcadia, or in those dull *epopees* written in dishonor of Homer, or in those bombastic odes outraging Pindar and Horace. It was not so that Italian literature had risen, when, the young Italian republics having vindicated their natural rights, and invaded the sanctuary of letters, confined hitherto to the shade of the cloisters, it started into new existence, wild and fiery as the age which it was called to enlighten, full-grown and armed, like Minerva, from the head of its great father, Dante.

Dante was the father of romanticism, though that name was not to be mentioned till five centuries later. Romantic were Petrarch and Boccacio, who described their feelings and their age. Romantic were Ariosto and Tasso, who read the ancients, only to ascertain, themselves, how vast a field remained open for new conceptions ; and their lays are the songs of the people, and find an echo in the rudest hearts, from the fisherman of Baia, to the gondolier of the Venetian lagoons. But then liberty failed, and, with it, national energy. The prince threw gold at the feet of the bard, and the bard stooped to gather it ; art became a trade ; academies were opened, and sent forth rhyme-smiths by the score ; then pedantry came, and dictated its laws. The bed of Procrustes was produced, and all capacities were stretched or mutilated, according to the academical pattern.

This spirit of classicism, this retrospective literature, reproducing itself to infinity, preaching a crusade against all innovations, patronized by the apprehensive jealousy of the

Italian princes, zealously coöperating with the artful policy by which they undermined the national character, and strengthened thus, in proportion to their successful usurpations, invaded all branches of instruction, and reigned uncontrolled.

It taught, that the Greeks and Latins, issuing more freshly from the hands of nature, free from all mixture, free from all specious refinements of an artificial culture, had contemplated and painted nature in her native innocence and graces, smiling with the roses, fragrant with the perfumes of the happy climes of the East ; that an instinctive taste for order, proportion, and symmetry, for justness and measure, had early determined for them the confines of the beautiful, and naturally dictated the rules of unity for their poems and dramas, with the same judgment that had presided over the construction of their temples and theatres. It taught that Italy was, by birthright, a classic land, a vast museum of classic remains and memorials, and that her children had inherited that exquisite organization and that sober imagination, by which their fathers had chosen to restrain themselves within certain limits, had combined union with vastness and variety, and raised edifices, which are still braving the redoubled efforts of time and of man ; that the imagination of the northern nations is gloomy, their traditions dark and dreary, like the aspect of their forests, their fancies heavy and dull, like the frown of their sky, that, in subjects derived from modern history, there is too much matter of fact, prosaic notoriety, ever to afford room for poetical fictions ; that the speculative sciences have despoiled the modern world of its most charming illusions ; that poetry, like painting, loves to contemplate objects fading in the distance, and involved in a mysterious twilight. It was added, with a strange mixture of hypocrisy and cowardice, that the Christian religion is too awful a subject, and modern patriotism too delicate, to be prostituted to poetical dreams, to become an object of scoffing profanation, or a source of revolutionary effervescence.

On the other hand, the new school have proclaimed, that literature must take the lead in the progress of society ; that it must substantially belong to the age and nation for which it is produced ; that it must divine the spirit of the times, and guide men for the best ; that religion is poetry, and can derive more evidence from the warmest in-

spirations, than from the most subtile arguments ; that among the ancients the types of the beautiful had something too ideal, too abstract, too general ; that their poetry was etching, chiselling, not painting ; that their notions of symmetry and harmony, their laws of the three unities, depended on local circumstances, — on the measure of their rhythm, or the shape of their stage ; but that order prescribes no scale of dimensions ; that unity is not incompatible with immensity, nay, that immensity is the comprehension of all unities ; that the ancients spoke to the imagination, or to the senses, not to the heart ; that their feelings had too much of earth, while our affections have been sanctified and ennobled by the influence of a pure religion, and the progressive refinement of manners ; that the pagan sought all enjoyment in this world, while the Christian places all his expectations beyond ; that, independent of all reasonings, every age must be represented by its own literature ; that we may take advantage of the inheritance of past ages, since it has been providentially preserved, but we must have our own productions, and build in our turn for posterity.

“ *Qui nous délivrera des Grecs et des Romains ?* ”

Why should not the legends of chivalry, the crusades, the annals of the Middle Ages, the wars, the voyages, the errors of our forefathers, and even the sufferings and the hopes of the living age afford a high subject for poetry, as long as the heart is beating with them ? When will our poets lay aside their *Medeas* and *Alcestises*, their *Troy* and *Messenia*, old fables, to which use and abuse have made us indifferent, of which we are sick at the very bottom of our hearts ; and tell us of old England, of noble France, of fair Italy, of the *Alhambra*, of *Columbus*, of *Doria* and *Dandolo*, of *Washington* and *Napoleon*, of the martyrs of the *Grève*, and the heroes of the *Beresina* ; of events, of which the report is still stirring the air ; of horrors, with which our nerves are still thrilling ; of calamities, for which our hearts are still bleeding ?

These theories, radiant with the light of truth, flattering the revolutionary mood which agitates the mind in Italy, have visibly prevailed over the most active part of the population, the young ; and all modern productions, since the days of *Alfieri*, have displayed a more or less determined tendency to the romantic. That school, however, could not obtain there such a decisive success as it met with in England, and

Germany, where it originated. Italy was in possession of larger treasures of classical lore, and classic prejudices had a deeper foundation. Romanticism has only secured its victory ; it belongs to the coming age to reap the advantages of it, and direct it to the noble purposes for which it seems to have been called into life.

Alfieri was, in Italy, the last of the classics ; and happy was it for that school, that it could, at its close, shed a light so dazzling as to shroud its downfall in its glory, and trouble, for a long while, with jealous anxiety, the triumph of its fortunate rival. When we number the greatest tragedian of Italy among the classics, we consider him only in regard to the form and style of his dramas, not to the spirit that dictated them. Whatever might be the shape, which his education, or the antique cast of his genius, made him prefer in his productions, no poet ever contributed more powerfully to the reformation of the character of his countrymen. For that object, he only needed to throw before them the model of his own character ; it mattered little, whether it was drawn with the pencil, or carved with the chisel ; whether it was wrapped up in the Roman gown of Brutus, or in the Florentine cassock of Raimondo de' Pazzi. Properly speaking, he belongs to no school ; he stands by himself, the man of all ages, the man of no age. — The romantic taste gained ground. The Jacobin legions invaded every thing around him ; he knew nothing, of it, he heard nothing. Many years since, he had retired from the stage of the world ; his mission was fulfilled, and he hastened to immortality, unconscious of the storms that thickened around him. Then the great catastrophe arrived ; the new democracy imported from Paris, and the flame of military renown, left no leisure for study. All was absorbed in the general vertigo, until the rage of the elements abated. Then men began to count each other, and to exchange congratulations on their happy escape. The general attention was then shared among three contemporaries of different manners and taste ; characteristic geniuses, destined to represent the opposite parties into which the Italians, in the alternation of so many vicissitudes, were compelled to range themselves.

The first, surrounded with honors and affluence ; respected, but closely watched by the reinstalled governments as a formidable enemy, but a faithless friend ; surrounded by a crowd of young poets, and old pedants ; his hazle hair sprinkled

with the frosts of age, his smile radiant and winning, his brow contracting, ever and anon, as if from an inward sting of remorse ; Monti, the poet of the times, sold to all parties, the constant friend of the conqueror. — The second, still clad in the uniform of a Cisalpine officer, with a dark, menacing countenance, disfigured by a large volume of hair and whiskers, with the marks of wild passions and a disorderly life,

“ Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,”

Ugo Foscolo, a soldier and a poet, the austere patriot, the victim of his own violence, hesitating between exile and the dagger of Ortis. — The last, a soft, colorless face, with a deep, serene eye, a delicate frame, downcast, pensive, sad, Pindemonte, just arrived from his country-seat, a harmless spectator, hating no man, respected by all parties, secure in his integrity and in his unenvied obscurity. — Bred up with the classic taste, occupied in translations of Homer, influenced by the reigning authority of the genius of Alfieri, but early brought into the midst of the innovating activity of their age, obeying the general current of thought, and naturally placed at the head of the movement, these three poets were destined to constitute the link between the established theories, and the invading ideas, between old and young Italy. It is to them, and to a few of their predecessors, that we owe the restoration of Dante ; the redeemer, the regenerator, the prophet, unheeded and forgotten in times of prosperity, resuscitated in days of perplexity ; the glorious pyramid, raising its head above the region of storms, a rallying point for the sons of Italy against future dispersion.

Monti, the most able reviver of the Ghibeline poet, the greatest master of versification, perhaps, after him, had all of Dante excepting his soul. That rich, pompous dress, that ever-rolling majesty, that dazzling vividness of coloring, was found, at length, to cover only barrenness and shallowness, only ashes and smoke. It was found, that his inventive powers were limited, his images vague and undefined. A total absence of principle, an entire want of conviction, of faith, of character, soon broke the spell of that borrowed grandiloquence. The active minds, the generous, the confident, spurned the wanton seduction, and the reign of Monti was over.

Foscolo, like Alfieri, rather a great soul, than a great mind, mastering men and events, mastered by his passions, in a perpetual struggle with himself, reining his imagination,

and paralyzing his forces, only showed that he was a genius, but fulfilled not the mission of genius. Diving into the most sanguine illusions of the times, writing and fighting, roving and raving, loving much, and hating much more, Foscolo had no taste, no leisure, no aptitude for the pursuit of a regular course of ideas. — Satisfied with having won the favors of fame by a short courtship of four hundred lines, with having poured out his soul in the pages of his Venetian hero, the author of *I Sepolcri* and *Jacopo Ortis* sunk in disappointment and inaction, to die in distress and bitterness of heart.

Pindemonte, a master of the gentle and delicate feelings, the high priest of melancholy, of a sweet, all-endearing melancholy, giving heart and voice to the whole kingdom of nature, a man of innocence and forbearance, was not in unison with the unsettled period in which he was destined to live. Fifty years earlier, he might have raised and ennobled, fifty years later he might have assuaged and consoled, his countrymen ; but in that raging effervescence, in that ebbing and heaving of passions, his voice could not make itself audible, any more than a cry of distress in the roar of the ocean, any more than the strain of the lark in the din of a hurricane. — And thus, with the highest qualifications, each of the three poets of the age of Napoleon failed in gaining for himself the title of the poet of the age ; the first, discredited by a cowardly connivance ; the second, exhausted in a desperate struggle ; the third, cast into the shade by a harmless neutrality. But, if all of them renounced the glory of leading the way in the progress of the new school, they left, however, high claims to our gratitude, as having, willing or unwilling, favored its rapid diffusion ; Foscolo, by dignifying the trade of poetry with the sanctity of patriotism, as minstrelsy was once associated with all the splendor of chivalry ; Monti, by demolishing the last Arcadian and academical ramparts of pedantry ; Pindemonte, by giving the soul a wide empire over fancy ; all of them, by turning Italian literature to its original sources, by attempting subjects of an immediate interest, of a heart-thrilling influence ; by singing themselves, their age, and their country.

Almost at the setting of that fair constellation, a young believer arose, alone, and as yet unrivalled, to give, by his influence, a name to the literary reform, that had begun long before him, — Manzoni.



As soon as the abating of the revolutionary flood afforded some ground for studious pursuits in Italy, the German literature, ripened among the preceding commotions, appeared on the top of the Alps ; young, active, gigantic. Italian restlessness turned to Germany, it turned to England and Spain, to the East, and to the North. The sphere of studies was prodigiously extended. Shakspeare and Milton never read, or never understood ; Garcilasso and Lope de Vega, dead and buried ; Brahminic verses, Icelandic legends, Gothic epopees, unknown lands ; the Niebelungenlied, the Bible, the Koran, — were now placed by the side of Homer and Dante ; while Goethe and Schiller, Byron and Scott, Lamartine and Victor Hugo, sent every day a supply of new models. It was amazing and frightful ; it was the tower of Babel ; it was a literary fair of all ages and countries.

Manzoni came up in that recent affluence. With a mind imbued with the maxims of freedom and patriotism, common in Italy to all who were educated on this side of 1800, he embraced the romantic views respecting the substance and form of his art. He gave Italy two historical tragedies, on national subjects, free from the bondage of Aristotelian rules. — *Carmagnola* and *Adelchi*, the best dramas in Italy since the *Saul* of Alfieri, the standard works of romanticism in that country, have, by the general consent of strangers, been ranked by the side of the best modern productions ; Goethe and his school have been proud of adopting their author.

Of those tragedies, only the first was tried upon the stage, and met with poor success. Manzoni, a genius of the very first order, giving life to all objects he takes in hand, master of all the keys of the imagination and the heart, the greatest lyric poet, we think, Italy ever produced, did not equally possess that vastness and calmness of mind, which embrace the whole of a tragedy. Recently placed in contact with Shakspeare and Schiller, seeing in their works a manifest breach of the three unities of the Greeks, he believed, perhaps, that they had abolished all unity. This is far from being the case. The unity of time, from twenty-four hours, had been extended to months and years, to the lifetime of a hero ; the scene, from the vestibule of a palace, had passed from place to place, had crossed seas and mountains ; the four, or six personages, had been multiplied to a whole court, to a

nation ; but the action, the interest, the movement of the drama, far from stagnating or slackening, had gained in strength and intensity. Taking any of the best models of the romantic theatre, say *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Don Carlos*, or the *Conspiracy of Fiesco*, it will be easily perceived, whether the poet, or the spectator, loses, for a single instant, his object of view. It is, we repeat, only the scale, that has been altered. It is unity in larger dimensions, but still unity. Now we do not mean, that Manzoni's tragedies are wanting in such unity. *Adelchi* is the extinction of the Lombard dynasty ; *Carmagnola* is the cold-blooded sacrifice of a confiding warrior to the jealous suspicion of a cowardly government. All the episodes essentially belong to the subject ; every scene leads us to the catastrophe ; but we believe, that there is wanting that warmth, that simplicity of action, that proportion between the means and end, which permit us to view the whole at a glance and follow its progress through its digressions, which persuade us of the importance of the episodes, which keep our minds in suspense, our hearts in anxiety. Those tragedies are inimitable in their details. The fifth act of *Carmagnola*, and the fourth of *Adelchi*, are grand specimens of correct and sublime pathos. Some of the monologues, and some of the characters, are delineated with a perfect knowledge of the inmost recesses of the human heart ; the three chorusses are the noblest effusions of prophetic inspiration, the most holy lessons of patriotic admonition. But alas ! romanticism asked poetry for the people ; and how can these two tragedies come home to the people, which, for want of connexion, cannot be performed.

What has been said of the historical dramas, we are disposed to apply to the historical novel. *I Promessi Sposi* has placed Manzoni by the side of Scott. Yet the reader, who takes up that book for a novel, will find himself sadly disappointed. It had already been imputed as a fault to the original inventor of that class of writing, that his two first volumes were wasted in painting manners and times, and the action proceeded slowly until the beginning of the third. But in Manzoni there is no action at all. A monk, a nun, a cardinal, a pedant, a gossip, are successively introduced ; it takes one or two chapters to acquaint us with each of them ; insurrections and famine, rapes, conversions, pestilence are produced ; but the author seems

embarrassed with the means he has called to his aid, the conjuror seems at a loss how to get rid of the demons he has ventured to evoke.

True, each of these episodes is worth in itself a romance. True, the *Monaca di Monza* is a tale of woe, which wrings our hearts with anguish and rage. True, the pestilence of Milan makes us forget Thucydides, Lucretius, Boccaccio ; scenery and manners, individuals and masses, — all is breathing with the colors of life. True, the farewell of Lucia to her home is a new revelation of heaven to earth ; but why should such beauties have been put together with such a deplorable absence of any attempt at order and plan ; why should they crowd the scene without giving it movement and life ?

So much for the form ; but, if we look to the spirit that dictated the works of Manzoni, as well as Pellico, and many of their followers, we shall easily perceive, that they are still far from answering the wants of the age, far from being the models Italy had a right to expect from the redeeming school.

The most cruel ravages the doctrines of the French revolution had inflicted upon Italy had fallen upon the religious creeds of the land. Catholicism, a dismantled edifice, supported by the cohesive strength of habit and tradition, was naturally giving place to cautious but progressive repairs, to an enlightened though not incendiary reform. French philosophy thought otherwise. It struck to the right and left until the whole building was levelled to the ground, and strewed salt upon the soil, condemning it to eternal sterility. It was but too easy a task. At the fall of Napoleon, most of the honest thinkers of Italy were, we fear, skeptics. There remained, we hope, many hearts yet filled with the fear of God, but few tongues that dared still to proclaim his name. Such extremes could not go far without rousing a spirit of reaction. The romantic innovators, trusting the success of the national cause to the remoulding of the moral character of the people, cast their gauntlet to that chilling philosophy, and entered the lists for God and his discarded revelation. But there was more ardor in their emprise, than discernment. Their chivalrous magnanimity led them to take upon themselves the whole of the question, the wrong side as well as the right. The spirit of Christianity could yet be revived ; the old zeal for Catholicism, never. Biblical truth and evangelic charity

could still work wonders ; priestly craft and monkish ignorance could no longer be popular. The revelation of God remained untouched ; the impositions of man had been judged. There exists in Italy an inveterate antipathy to the court of Rome. If the papal sway has been an evil for all Christendom, for Italian union it has been mortal doom. Prelates and cardinals, abbeys and nunneries, inquisition and censure, confession and purgatory, all these are losing their influence for ever. Catholicism, as a name, is still revered in Italy. A great number of its rites are indigenious. Italian steadiness will not easily be driven to an open profession of apostasy. But the most conscientious Catholic in that country has made his protest within the privacy of his heart ; every man forms his sect by himself, and all those individual creeds meet in one church, as if for a tacit compact of mutual forbearance.

What patriotic object then could the Italian novelist propose to himself, when he made a monk and a cardinal his favorite heroes ; when, in an enlightened country, in the age of Galileo and Fra Paolo, he found no greatness, no virtue, but under the cowl or the mitre ? Why did he choose his subject out of a period of oppression and woe ? Does history tell nothing of Italy but reverses ? or has she no reverses unmingled with disgrace ? or did he think ancient disgrace could atone for present abjectness ? or did he wish to reconcile his country to her present abjectness by the despairing conviction, that such has always been, such must be always, her doom ?

With far more limited powers, other novelists in Italy have better divined their times. Romance is in Italy, as elsewhere, the most popular literature, not excepting even the theatre. The Waverley novels have made the historical traditions of an obscure kingdom the inheritance of all Europe. Walter Scott is a sorcerer in Italy. His works have appeared there in no less than four different translations, and several new editions are annually exhausted. It could hardly be expected that the Italian novels should be free from imitation. Few of those productions, in fact, can hitherto lay much claim to original invention. *Il Castello di Trezzo* and *Falco della Rupe* strike us by a few pictures of a masterly hand, with terribly sublime strokes, after the manner of Dante and Michel Angelo ; the *Sibilla Odaleta*, the *Fidanzata Ligure*,

and *I Prigionieri di Pizzighettone*,\* describe manners and characters with sufficient skill and variety ; *Marco Visconti* excels in the exhibition of the tenderest feelings, *La Battaglia di Benevento*, and *L' Assedio di Firenze*, in the enthusiastic movement of the highest affections. But the authors of these novels have over Manzoni the great advantage, of having illustrated such periods of the history of their country, as awaken a ready interest and leave a lasting impression.

The annals of Italy, her early revolutions, her unfortunate discords and feuds, afford but too many incidents and characters for romance. Indeed, we know of no novel more entertaining than the sixteen volumes of the "History of the Italian Republics of the Middle Ages," by Sismondi. It was very sad, that Manzoni, a man of upright intentions, could not find better champions than his Renzo, or Fra Cristoforo, while strangers chose at their pleasure Rienzi, Fiesco, and Foscari, misrepresenting them at the expense of historical truth and national pride. On that account the most fortunate production, among the vast number of novels inundating the Peninsula, was *Ettore Fieramosca*, by Massimo d'Azeglio, the son-in-law of Manzoni. A popular narrative, the revival of a long forgotten page of history, the last success of Italian valor in its decline, a private engagement of thirteen Italians with as many French knights, in a close field, at Barletta, a brilliant episode in the wars of the Spaniards in Italy, at the opening of the sixteenth century, has gained more proselytes to the patriotic cause, than any other book published for many years. It is evidently the work of a young mind. The fancy has not been sufficiently chastened, the passions not judiciously managed ; but there is throughout the two volumes a vigor, an enthusiasm, that on the first perusal easily disarm all criticism. The author has indulged perhaps too long, and too often, in horrors and atrocities. It is a fault that has been long attributed to the whole of the romantic school ; it is what has often deterred severe minds from embracing its ideal principles, and has induced others to substitute new names and definitions.

The wide range, that we have given to romanticism, dispenses us from entering into such nice distinctions. Ro-

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\* We understand with pleasure, that a gentleman of Boston is now occupied with an English translation of the last of these works.

manticism is for us an abstract, conventional term, by which we designate the appropriation of a literature to the age and country from which it springs ; the consentaneousness with, and the influence upon, the feelings, the wants, the creed, the memorials, and the high destinies of man in the various stages of society in which it finds him. Romanticism for us is Nature, that gave Homer to heroic Greece, Tacitus to degraded Rome, Dante to distracted Italy, Shakspeare to aspiring England. Romanticism we call the literature of the romance languages, as long as the romance languages are the effusion of the romance virtues, Christianity, Chivalry, Patriotism. Romanticism is then not responsible for the aberrations of taste, for the exaggeration of tragic enormities, which, principally imported from France and Germany, have darkened the pages of a few frantic productions, now enjoying in Italy an ephemeral popularity. This is a general disease of the age, the result of turbid humors tainting the spirits ; a depravation of feelings, such as led the ancient Romans to their bloody games of wild beasts and gladiators ; a deplorable mania, invading music and painting, ballets and operas, turning the stage into a slaughter-house, making heroes of ruffians and wantons, to blunt and drown sensibility, to give us ague, headache, and sea-sickness.

The school of Manzoni has successfully opposed its influence to this misconstruction of the tendencies of romanticism ; but it has gone, perhaps, too far in the opposite extreme. It seems to have forgotten, that excitement is the persuasive faculty of art ; that virtue moderates, and religion sanctifies, but neither of them commands an absolute extinction of the passions. Such remarks are especially applicable to a book of wide-spread reputation, tending to the noblest aims, dictated with the purest conscientiousness, with the most ingenuous candor, — *Le Mie Prigioni*.

Silvio Pellico has been a name dear to Italy since his earliest youth. *La Francesca da Rimini* is the most popular tragedy now exhibiting on the Italian stage. His other dramas, and his *Cantiche*, chivalrous legends in verse, drawn from the chronicles of the Middle Ages, though visibly affected by the prostration and languor of a prison, are written in good taste, and destined perhaps to rise higher in the public estimation ; but the name of the author is to remain attached to another work, that of which he himself is the

hero. *Le Mie Prigioni*, owing perhaps to a very happy translation,\* by which that book has been made the property of American readers, has obtained more popularity in this country, than the original work could ever secure in Italy.

Among Americans,

“Fortunati, quorum jam mœnia surgunt,”

where the social order has been permanently maintained since its very settlement, in a land blessed with the influence of self-imposed institutions, secure from foreign aggression, what the general welfare most requires of the citizen is a sedate, well-disciplined temper ; every reluctant, ambitious spirit would prove but fatal to public tranquillity ; but in Italy, in the midst of hostile factions and jarring interests, in a land of struggles and violence, how would acquiescence in existing circumstances be interpreted, but as cowardly stupidity ; what would be the result of such a temper, but to provoke more outrage, and secure impunity to the oppressor ? The “Prisons” of Pellico is not the book of a bigot, not of a man who has forsaken his cause, or wishes for a reconciliation with his unrelenting foe ; it is the long, painful effort of a martyr, who has traced his sufferings to his Maker, blessed him for the trial he was pleased to inflict, adored his will in his instruments. Sublime virtues ! but the long solitude of his sorrows had made him alone ; he had abstracted himself from the cause he had served ; he could not find a voice of indignation for his country ; he had pardoned for her as for himself. She wanted of him no political rashness, no vehemence ; but there is a measure in all things. If all his countrymen should embrace his maxims, it would be over for ever with Italy. We may drop a tear of sympathy on the narrative of evils that have broken a lofty spirit ; we may admire the self-possession of a victim who spares his executioner the expression of vain resentment and invective ; but Italy must derive a different moral from the doctrines of Christ. God has not created man in his own image, to offer him an object of outrage and torture to his fellow beings. Sons of the same father, redeemed by the same ransom, the blood spilt in fraternal quarrels falls upon the head of the aggressor. The boundaries of the nations are determined by the works of God ; he who invades the home of his neighbour violates his law. “Let the Austrian recross

the Alps, and he shall be a brother again.”\* Such are the morals that must needs be preached in Italy ; and the propagation of such doctrines engages the eager attention of that undefinable agent, known under the name of Young Italy. By this appellation we do not mean to designate only that sect, which, in 1833, attempted one more revolutionary effort in Savoy and Piedmont. That sect, only a fraction of an immense association, a disorderly assemblage of ardent youths in a foreign land, without means or intelligence, venturing an attack of which hardly an indistinct rumor was heard in the country till long after their failure, could only result in adding to the number of victims. At the head of that ill-fated expedition there was a young enthusiast, uniting the boldest ambition to the highest capacities ; of that pale, bilious temperament, so common in southern climates ; whose passions all obey but themselves ; of whose stuff are made Robespierres or Napoleons ; a young student of twenty, a Genoese of noble extraction, an exile, Giovanni Mazzini.

It was in June, 1831, that he first made himself known, in France, by an Address to Charles Albert of Savoy, on his accession to the throne of Sardinia, inviting him not to disappoint the expectations he had raised in Italy in 1821, when, being only Prince of Carignano, he styled himself the chief of all the Carbonari in the country. That Address was a flash of divine eloquence, such as had never before shone over Italy. His companions in misfortune gathered in adoration, and bent before his powerful genius. He established himself at Marseilles, as editor of a journal called, after the name of the sect of which it was to be the organ, *La Giovine Italia*. Several numbers of that journal appeared at different intervals in the course of that and the following year. Mazzini wrote the greater part of their contents ; but, either because the management of his vast plans of conspiracy engrossed the best part of his time, or because his genius was wearied and exhausted at the first start, his articles were dictated by an insane virulence ; the fretful jealousy of exiles was alarmed by his imperious ambition, and he hurried on his insurrectional schemes to the destruction of himself and of others. Involved in rash attempts against all governments, condemned to death in Italy, banished from France,

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“ Il Franco

Ripassi l’Alpe e tornerà fratello.”

Nicolini. — *Giovanni di Procida*.



and proscribed in Switzerland, no longer finding where to shelter his head, he finally escaped public notice, probably hidden in some obscure abode, to reappear, perhaps, under better auspices, in hours of action.

But the spirit of Young Italy, we repeat, did not manifest itself exclusively in the pages of that journal, or of two other periodicals, *L'Esule* and *L'Italiano*, also published in France. Historical and philosophical works, periodical and fugitive literature, though closely watched by the police in the various districts of the Peninsula, yet all display a tendency to the developement of new energies, all coöperate to urge on with a new impulse the whole social order, and the chains of ancient institutions weighing upon it.

To search into the most obscure annals of history, and reveal the glories of the land ; to derive from that past lustre a feeling of shame for present disgrace, a ray of hope for future resurrection ; to spread a chivalrous, devotional, enterprising spirit, inviting men to think, to struggle, to strive ; to combat individualism, and all that tends to isolate man, and make him forgetful of what he owes to society ; to exhibit in dark colors, dark even to exaggeration, the evils of division and servitude, and cry, "Italy ! Italy !" such is the mission of romanticism. Though some of them may be misled by party spirit, by excessive zeal, or by short-sighted prejudices, there is not a writer of any credit in Italy, who does not conscientiously exert his powers for the improvement of the human race, none that does not actively seek the welfare of his country. Letters have resumed their place in society.

The influence that such a noble purpose must necessarily extend over the sources, the substance, and form of all present productions, in order to put them within the reach of the multitude, and engage public attention, has given rise to interminable disputes, in which, as usual, the different parties could not understand each other ; the last result of which has been, to assure to every individual genius the independent right of following the dictates of his own taste, deriving the beautiful from its immediate fountains, and reproducing it in its natural dimensions, in its original order.

The books we have referred to at the head of the present article, are evidently written in the spirit of romanticism, and are valued as among its most eminent models. Tommaso Grossi, a living poet, still in the flower of his age, early distinguished in his country by a short, half-satirical, half-politi-

cal poem, in the Milanese dialect, *L'Ombra di Prina*, abandoning comic poetry with nobler views, subsequently produced his *Melodie Lombarde*, a charming little volume of national lays ; *L'Ildegonda*, a romantic legend of the thirteenth century ; *La Fuggitiva*, a tale of woe, an episode of the Russian campaign of 1812, originally written in the native dialect of the poet, and lately by him translated into Italian verse ; and *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata*, an heroico-chivalrous work in fifteen cantos, which he did not choose to call an epic poem, something like a *Jerusalem Delivered* in a romantic garb. Lastly, after a long interval employed by him in the production of his historical novel, *Marco Visconti*, he published, last year, *Ulrico e Lida*, another tale in verse, an episode of the long wars between the two republics of Milan and Como, in the earlier part of the twelfth century.

Grossi, the Bellini of poetry, as he is commonly called in Italy, is the true poet of the heart. We know of few poets, in whose lines gentle thoughts issue more pure and spontaneous. The affections, occupying the most eminent place in his poems, are entirely free from that affectation, from that artificial refinement, the capital fault of Italian poets from the days of Petrarch, which, known under the name of *concetti* among poets, and *maniera* among painters, has caused strangers to say, that the Italians have their feelings in their head instead of their heart. Grossi has nothing epic in his poetry, and we have reason to rejoice at it. Italy had already heroic poems in sufficient number. In our days, when mind decides the chances of combat, and even military courage has assumed altogether a moral stamp, the everlasting battles of Homer and Tasso have become wearisome. Grossi understood this. In his tales, even in his poem on the Crusades, the chief struggle is carried on by the heart ; heroism is, in his verse, only chivalrous enthusiasm. Religion is resignation and hope ; love is devotion, purity, and sorrow. As Raffael has been called the painter of Madonnas, and Correggio the painter of children, so we would call Grossi the poet of broken-hearted maidens, in their final agony.

*La Fuggitiva*, a runaway Milanese girl, following her lover beyond the Danube and the Mosqua, losing him in the last victory of the French in Russia, involved alone and helpless among the disasters of that woful retreat, surviving all hardships only to expire in the arms of her mother, repentant and pardoned ;—*Ildegonda*, a new Juliet, atoning for a pure,

guileless love, with long torture and anguish in a nunnery, insulted, harassed by cowed fiends, haunted by terrific visions, feverish, delirious, and with a vigorous, reluctant vitality, emptying to the last drop the cup of woe that had been filled for her by Providence ; — *Giselda*, the fair pilgrim of the Po, riding on her white palfrey by the side of her brother, tender, inexperienced, a prisoner in Antioch, in love with a handsome infidel, erring, repenting, relapsing, innocent in her apostasy as in her conversion ; — such are the creations of the fancy of Grossi ; a poet, whose festive harp, apparently tuned to an exuberant effusion of lively images, suddenly turns to mournful strains, rising higher by far than you would have fancied pathos could reach. And yet such emotions are reserved for a few hearts ; popular as Grossi is in Italy, it is only a gentle spirit that can choose him for a favorite poet. The taste of *Oltremonte*, especially the modern French school, aims not to shake the fibres, but to rend them asunder. They anatomize the darkest corners of the human heart ; they plunge into the lowest abyss of crime and infamy ; they delight in scenes of torture and scaffolds. They are true to nature, indeed, and produce an ephemeral effect ; but it is ever at the expense of taste, as well as delicacy, innocence, and virtue. The Italians have preserved themselves pure from the dangerous contagion ; and, though their productions must appear tame and insipid to a taste perverted by the continual perusal of Victor Hugo, or *Madame* George Sand, one day, perhaps, they will feel the happy results of their moderation. The faster we advance in a wrong course, the longer it will take us to return to the right one.

On another account, we have reason to congratulate Italy. Since 1800, there has not been an immoral book, of note, printed in that country, not even one not conscientiously directed to a severe reformation of moral principles. All sketch-books of travellers contain some abuse against the Italian name. The Italian character stands in all English and French novels as a model of all villany and profligacy. Yet sixty years have elapsed since the Abate Casti gave Italy, in his *Novelle Galanti*, a book written with as much elegance, and with as much impudence, as Byron ever displayed in his *Don Juan*, or Paul de Kock in his novels ; and this work of Casti is now a rare book in Italy, and is never reprinted but at Paris. True enough, the Italians, since the loss of their liberties,

have been systematically corrupted by their governments. True, the highest classes, even in our days, condemned to inactivity, lead a life of disorder and scandal ; but there is need of all the uncharitableness of ignorant travellers, not to recognise a striking general improvement. The day will come, perhaps, when the nations shall cherish towards each other more brotherly feelings ; till then, it is consoling, that the Italians have no such teachers of morals as Byron, Moore, or Bulwer ; Paul de Kock, or Victor Hugo.

*L' Esule*, by Pietro Giannone, a Modenese exile residing at Paris, does not exhibit, perhaps, an equal skill in composition ; though it is equally commendable on account of the noble sentiments that pervade its pages. Rather a novel in verse than a poem, written in various measures, this juvenile effort of a generous mind is the relation of a dark deed of vengeance and blood, the sudden execution of a sentence pronounced in a secret meeting of Carbonari ; a nocturnal enterprise, of which an exile, furtively restored to his home, is the hero ; a tragic tale, founded on facts, happily relieved by the contrast of softer colors and gentler images, varied by brilliant narratives and glowing descriptions, and overshadowed by a well-sustained veil of awful mystery.

We have no time to devote to such names as Pietro Sestini and Cesare Cantù, Carrer and Giorgini, Betteloni and Biava, young rhymers of high expectation in their country, but whose names are still too faint a sound ever to have reached these shores ; all of them either rapidly advancing in the footsteps of Manzoni, or opening new paths for themselves. Far less could we occupy ourselves with such poets as Nicolini, Rosini, Torti, Leopardi, and other names formerly numbered among the great, but now falling into comparative insignificance, either because their talents have been turned to other pursuits, or because, understanding but imperfectly the change of taste that has taken place in the last twenty years, they have been left behind their age.

It remains only to give some notice of Giovanni Berchet, a Lombard exile in London, "whose poetry," according to Maroncelli's expression, "produces homesickness in the poor exile, and kindles the fire of independence in the bosom of those who breathe the air of our adored Peninsula."

The *Romanze* of Berchet, the immediate expression of the feelings of the present age, are, without contradiction,

the most romantic production of Romanticism. They have hitherto been regarded only on account of their national importance, only as the war-song of the Italians, in their mute but not passive struggle against foreign oppression. None, in fact, of the modern poets has been better able to conceive the pining depression, the ardent impatience, under which the Italians are laboring, none to express the inveterate rancor long cherished in Italy, and especially in Lombardy, against the Austrian name. The spirit of the exile has roamed amidst the favorite haunts of his childhood; he has descended into the privacy of afflicted mansions; he has interrogated the tears of sisters and wives, and has revealed their secret anguish to the sympathies of all Europe.\* Here,

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\* It will, perhaps, be agreeable to our readers, if we give some short fragments of two of his most popular ballads, as they are utterly unknown in this country.

“ Sotto i pioppi della Dora,  
Dove l' onda è più romita,  
Ogni dì sull' ultim' ora,  
S' ode un suono di dolor;  
E' Clarina, a cui la vita  
Rodon l' ansie dell' amor.

\* \* \*

Già mature nel tuo seno,  
Bella Italia, fremean l' ire,  
Sol mancava il dì sereno  
Della speme e Dio il creò,  
Di tre secoli il desire  
In volere ei ti cangiò.

\* \* \*

E Clarina al suo diletto  
Cinse il brando, e tricolore  
La coccarda in sull' elmetto  
Di sua man gli collocò,  
Poi, suffusa di rossore,  
Con un bacio il congedò.

Ma indiscreta sul bel volto  
Una lagrima pur scese;  
Ei la vide; al ciel rivolto,  
Diè un sospiro, e impallidì,  
E la vergine cortese  
Il guerriero inanì.

\* \* \*

Quì Gismondo il dì fatale  
Scansò l' ira dei tiranni,  
Quì Clarina il tristo vale  
Sotto i pioppi a lui gemè,  
E quì a pianger vien gli affanni  
Dell' amante che perde.”

*Clarina.*

under the poplars of the Dora, in its most lonely recesses, is Clarina, the betrothed of an exile and his widow ; here, when he started to join the standards of the insurrection of 1821, when she adorned the helmet of her warrior with the national colors, in the midst of her terrors she had still for him a word of encouragement ; here, when all was lost, when she met him once more to exchange a last farewell, she had still for him a word of consolation and hope ; here now she sits alone and deserted, and none has for her a word of sympathy or encouragement. — There, a man of the north, a foreign visiter, hastening to breathe the air of sweet Italy, is accosted on the summit of the Alps by one of the hermits of Mount Cenis, who points out to him the vale of the Po lying at their feet, smiling like a garden, outspreading like an ocean. Before that bewildering sight, the venerable old man covers his face with both hands, and a tear steals from his eyes. Pressed by the stranger, he talks of his private chagrins ; he tells of the sorrows of those hundred cities glittering on the plain ; and, on the threshold of Italy, the desire of Italy dies in the heart of the stranger. To the fair hills and vineyards, saddened by tears, to the fair cities, crowded with the victims of tyranny, he prefers the gloomy pines of his forests, the fogs and the dismal blast of the east wind of his own shores.\*

Such is the poetry Italy is in need of ; and while such verses are sung in England, or Egypt, or Barbary, or in any land that may offer the exile a shelter, the echo of millions of

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\* "Non è lieta,  
Non può stanza esser di giubilo,  
Dove il pianto è al limitar.  
Non è lieta, ma pensosa,  
Non v' è plauso, ma silenzio,  
Non v' è pace, ma terror.  
Come il mar su cui si posa,  
Sono immensi i guai d' Italia,  
Inesausto è il suo dolor.

\* \* \* \*

Tal sull' Itala frontiera,  
Dell' Italia il desiderio  
All' estranio in sen morì ;  
Ai bei colli, ai bei vigneti,  
Contristati dalle lagrime  
Che i tiranni fan versar,  
Ei preferse i tetri abeti,  
L' ardue nebbie, ed i perpetui  
Aquiloni del suo mar."

*Il Romito del Cenisio.*

hearts answers at home ; and those verses repeated, copied, smuggled, elude all precautions, evade all persecutions, until they appear with open face, in full daylight, secure in the patronage of popular enthusiasm.

But, independent of the patriotic feelings, that dictated these ballads, they will pass to posterity as a fine specimen of taste and elegance. Their principal charm resides peculiarly in the style. The Italian language had, during the course of five centuries, strangely deviated from the original simplicity of the age of Dante. Antiquated by the Latinists of the fifteenth century, diluted by the prating *Cinquecentisti*, distracted by the raving *Seicentisti*, adulterated by the *Gallomaniacs* of the last century, cramped by the *Accademia della Crusca*, soiled by flattery and servility, that noble language lay down overcome and prostrated, an artificial construction of empty words ; cumbrous, not rich ; pedantic, not correct ; with none of its original beauties, except its ever-fascinating melody. The revival of Dante has admirably coöperated to restore the Italian to its native energy and simplicity. Manzoni, and his school, form a new epoch in the style, as well as in the taste, of Italian literature. Till lately, poetry, in that country, had always been a different language from prose. Nature had suggested plain constructions, art had adopted elaborate inventions ; all that was simple and natural the poet rejected as vulgar. The poet never called things by their names. All objects had a name among gods, a name among mortals. Hence, an infinite number of ideas found no place in verse for want of expression, and poetry sounded like Greek to the ears of the multitude.

The romantic school have made vigorous efforts to strip Italian poetry of its tinselled frippery. They have gained vigor and purity in proportion as they have adopted ease and simplicity ; they have enriched the language, by renouncing pomp and magnificence. Grossi and Berchet have their share in the good success of this fortunate innovation. The first a master of the elegiac, the second, of the lyrical style, they possess, in common, that rapid and concise fluency, that natural correspondence between thoughts and words, that make one feel, that an idea cannot have more than one expression.

In giving a short account of a few of the living poets of Italy, our object has been rather to point out what is to be ex-

pected from that country, than what she can actually boast of. If we were to lay such productions by the side of the dramas of Schiller and Goethe, or of the poems of Byron and Moore, we know, the balance would not be in favor of Italy. But such a comparison would be a manifest injustice. The fortunes of Foscolo, Pellico, Mazzini, Giannone, Berchet, show how dangerous it is in that country, to raise one's head above the common level ; how the doom of a martyr often awaits the success of a genius. True, Manzoni, Grossi, and a few others, have hitherto escaped uninjured ; but suspicion and espionage, hovering above their heads, leave little to be envied by their brothers abroad.

Let such works be offered as a proof, that Italian literature is not dead. Classicism is dead, that ever-lifeless literature, that cultivated art for the sake of art, the corrupting luxury of an enslaved age, is dead there, as everywhere else. But Italian literature has, in the same manner, languished and revived in other periods. And it has never sunk from its glories, without rising younger and greater. — The phoenix has been consumed upon her funeral pyre. Her last breath has vanished in the air with the smoke of her ashes ; but the dawn breaks ; the first rays of the sun are falling upon the desolate hearth ; the ashes begin to heave ; and from their bosom the new bird springs forth, with luxuriant plumage, displaying her bold flight, with her eyes fixed on that sun from which she derived her origin.

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#### ART. X. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *Life and Select Discourses of the Rev. Samuel H. Stearns.* Boston. Josiah A. Stearns. 1838. 8vo. pp. 420.

THIS volume, though diversified by no remarkable adventures, is full of interest. Mr. Stearns, whose recent death in Paris has disappointed many hopes, was a man of singular purity of character and refinement of intellect. He carried into the sacred office the most ardent zeal, the most single-hearted devotion to its severe and laborious duties. He was educated at Harvard University, where the modesty of his character and the correctness of his literary taste were highly appreciated. His feelings towards that institution, and his views of the obligations of its students, are thus expressed by his biographer.